

ASSOCIOGRAM

Source

This activity is adapted from "Inventaire de méthodes pour l'apprentissage interculturel", Euro-Institut, NovaTris. It was adapted and translated from French by Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja.

Themes

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Intercultural communication and dialogue

Competences addressed

- ▶ Knowledge of cultural differences in communication
- ▶ Skills: critical thinking

Complexity : Level 2

Group size : small groups of 5 to 6 people

Time : 20 minutes

Objectives

- ▶ To reflect on the meaning of words we use on a daily basis
- ▶ To realise that similar words are not used or understood in the same way by people within the same culture and between languages or cultures.

Preparation

This activity can be preceded by "Do you see what I see?" in order to reflect on the fact that we have different perspectives and ways of seeing the world.

Materials

Flip charts and markers on tables for each group.

Select the words you want participants to work on. Choose words that are used in all languages: democracy, leadership, tolerance, integration, school, education, etc.

Instructions

1. Tell participants that you want them to think about the meaning of common words they use and what they associate with these words.
2. Divide participants into small groups of 5 to 6 people and provide each group of participants with one word and ask them to create an associogram (see handout) with all the meanings/links/associations they make with that word.
3. After 10 minutes, ask each group to present to the others their associogram.

Debriefing and evaluation

You may use the following questions for debriefing.

- ▶ How easily did you find associations in the words?
- ▶ Were you surprised about some associations made by others?
- ▶ What did you realise?
- ▶ What can we say about language and intercultural communication?
- ▶ What can you take from this exercise?

Tips for facilitators

You could also ask participants to select the words they want to work on themselves.

In the case of a multilingual group, you can either get people with the same mother tongue to work together, and then compare between groups, or mix groups straight away and let them discuss the different associations.

One of the aspects to underline in the debriefing is that language as such is the result of a social convention, and in order to understand each other, people need to demonstrate patience and openness towards different perspectives on the same word or concepts.

Suggestions for follow-up

This activity could be followed by “In other words” in order to further reflect on the use of words and stereotypes in the media and public discourse.

Handouts

An example of an associogram

